

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for creating and distributing mass customized image, the method comprising the steps of:

5 providing a central computer including:

(a) a display device

(b) a central processing unit

(c) an input device

10 creating virtual items through mass input of file information into an executable file operating on the central computer to provide output data;

distributing from the central computer to a user at the remote computer an identifier associated with the virtual item;

receiving at the central computer, from said user at the remote computer, information related to said identifier;

15 automatically confirming the user and said virtual item based on said identifier;

and

causing said virtual item to be displayed to said user at the remote computer.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the identifier is distributed via a delivery service.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the identifier is distributed electronically.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the identifier causes the central computer to automatically retrieve said virtual item from a storage medium associated with the central
25 computer

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the identifier causes the central computer to dynamically construct said virtual item, as created through mass input of file information, at the time the user accesses the central computer.

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6. The method of claim 1, wherein the virtual item is distributed directly from the central computer to a web page to be accessed by the user.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the virtual item is distributed directly from the central computer to a printing apparatus to facilitate creating a distributed item, whereby the distributed item may be sent to user.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the virtual item is created by an operator applying input data within a graphic arts program to create an image design from image data to be applied to a virtual item and a digital input capture technology program is executed at the central computer to capture input data used to create the image data.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein the digital input capture technology program is executed simultaneously with the graphic arts program.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein said user may apply file information to the virtual item utilizing the graphic arts program in order to create a distributed item.
11. An apparatus for printing individually created images on objects, the system comprising:
- at least one remote computer, the remote computer being coupled to a central computer through a communications link, said communications link including a public communications network;
 - a digital image processing graphic arts programs;
 - a digital input capture technology programs; and
 - file information.

12. A system for creating images on items, the system comprising:
a central computer;
a remote computer;
means for generating at least one digital image;
5 means for transferring information about said digital image over a
communications network;
means for altering the at least one digital image; and
means for at least one digital image on a virtual item in response to a request.
- 10 13. A method for creating images on objects using a remote computer, the remote
computer being coupled to a central computer through a communications link which
includes a public communications network, the method comprising the steps of:
inputting data representative of information associated with an image at the
remote computer;
15 transmitting the information from the remote computer to the central computer
through the public communications network.
managing the information associated with the image;
transmitting the managed information from the central computer to the remote
computer through the public communications network; and
20 displaying the information in the form of an image.
14. A method for printing self-created images on objects, the method comprising the
steps of:
providing a central computer;
25 proving a remote computer;
providing an art creation center for creating design images, said art creation center
including:
(a) a graphic arts program;
(b) a digital input capture technology program;

- (c) a computer, wherein the graphic arts program and the digital input capture technology program execute simultaneously on the computer;
providing file information;
generating output data from the file information in the form of a design image
5 created using the art creation center;
generating a unique identifier associated with the file information in the form of a design image;
transmitting, over the Internet, the unique identifier associated with the file information in the form of a design image to the remote computer;
10 using the remote computer, electronically coupled to the Internet, to access the unique identifier;
using the remote computer to access the central computer over the Internet;
inputting the identifier at the central computer;
dynamically constructing and displaying at the remote computer, the design
15 image associated with the unique identifier.
15. The method of claim 14, wherein a user at the remote computer selects the design image to be transmitted to a printing apparatus for producing a distributed item.